

communities.

2. Increases in acceptance of gangs as a problem. More recently communities have acknowledged that gang activities were problems in some areas. Law enforcement agencies formed “gang units” and trained officers to recognize gang related activities. With these newly trained officers came an awareness of the extent of the problem so long ignored. This does not constitute a growth but a recognition of what already existed.
3. Through the North Carolina Gang Investigator’s Association a new network of well trained officers was formed to aid neighboring communities and help them recognize the presence of gangs in their communities. Members of this organization also provide community awareness presentations and provide news media with information on gang activities. With more public awareness comes an increased sensitivity to gang related activities.
4. Governor’s Crime Commission studies and other studies of gangs in North Carolina have increasingly been afforded better responses from law enforcement on gang activities as their knowledge and willingness to acknowledge gangs in their communities has grown. This increased willingness to share information provides new figures on the levels of gang presence in the state thus adding to the aggregate numbers published.
5. Specialized gang units provide better intelligence. Once thought of as a bunch of kids acting out and not deserving of law enforcement tracking, gangs and gang members are now documented. This allows law enforcement agencies to know a general count of gangs, gang members and their affiliates’ activities. As recent as five years ago, many law enforcement agencies (Raleigh and Charlotte included) had little or no data on the gangs and gang members in their jurisdictions. Today, these